

Fay Stanley Shulman #112  
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Q: Where were you living, Ms. Stanley, in December 7th, 1941?

A: I had just rented a house in St. Louis Heights which is above Honolulu. And oh, I'd gotten a big house because my husband, who was aboard the *Saratoga* and a friend of his, and his wife, and the two couples were going to share a house. So I got a big house above the heights, just in time to have a real front row view of the raid.

Q: When did you first realize that morning that something was happening out of the ordinary?

A: When... there was a girl living in the house when I rented it, and she was going back the... like the 12th of December. So she asked if she could stay. Her name was Jackie and she came and woke me up and saying, "We are being attacked." I could sleep through anything and have slept through earthquakes, and God knows what else. But she told me what was happening. (brief interruption while others enter the room)

Q: What happened then?

A: I went out, and everybody I talked to later had really funny reactions of what they did during the War. Some people went and got their toothbrushes and God knows what. What I did was go get my movie camera and start filming it. And I filmed it off and on all day long until I ran out of film.

Q: Just out of curiosity, what happened to that film?

A: I still got it...

Q: You still do?

A: ...and I've got really good pictures of it. I've got pictures... we could see everything. Right about where we were people started peeling off for their long runs into Pearl and you can even see the faces of the pilots in my film. It's scratchy and funny now but still it's good pictures of what happened.

Q: Hmm. When did you... What about your experiences later that day?

A: Well right after that we kept.... we had the radio on. Only we kept getting these bizarre reports that the water system had been poisoned, that troops were landing on Waikiki. Then we had a report that troops were landing on St. Louis Heights, which is where we were. So I put on my house coat and got my camera and got some extra film and went up to St. Louis Heights to

photograph the landing you know. God knows what I thought I was doing.

And anyway, there weren't any troops up there. And before the day is out, because I lived in the heights, several people I knew, and friends of people, would come and ask if they could stay with me. And during the next month, I had an awful lot of house guests; nearly all women with children, and all women alone. And so off and on, there were probably six different people that lived up there during the next month.

Q: Must have been tough feeding all those extra mouths?

A: It was. I even went into... threatened a grocery owner. The... nearly all the small shops were Japanese owned, and what they did was just go to earth and nobody would open up anything. And so I got my husband's service revolver and went in... essentially stuck up a grocery store. The problem with dealing with the shops and things was the money was frozen. Now not that day, but the next month or so, and I was left with something like two streetcar tokens or something. And there just was no cash. Nobody had any money at all. And so I had planned to give a party and I had several cases of sauterne and one case of champagne and I used the barter system through the next month. Any liquor and medicines were mediums of exchange. And I remember going up and down that hill swapping people, champagne and sauterne for canned goods, because we did have I think, three babies up there. And...

Q: How were you first recruited as a ward?

A: Oh, I saw a tiny little strip in the paper about it, and so I got hot on the phone. We had been... the owner of the house I lived at gave us evacuation notice. He wanted to move back to the [St. Louis] Heights too, on Christmas Eve. And so we really needed someplace to go and we all heard that we were being evacuated, women and children who were not doing service related jobs were evacuated, and I had no intention of being evacuated. And I remember, I called Nancy West and told her about it, and she was game to stay too. And so we both went down there together. I do want to get back to the day of the raid though.

Q: O.K., why don't you do that.

A: Uh, during the day, we found out for one thing that a lot of the radio reports we were getting were fraudulent. The... actually, the Honolulu broadcasters had gone off the air, and I still do not know what we were listening to; whether these were enemy broadcasts, or whether they were police short wave broadcasts. We were told at one time or another, that the Island had been taken.

And there was a lady who lived next door to me who had a shortwave radio and that night we went over there and huddled under blankets to... so that we wouldn't show a light, listening to the broadcast. We heard that the Island had been taken. We heard that the West Coast had been taken. There was an awful lot

of erroneous information around, and it was not until we saw that the flag raised over the Royal Hawaiian the next morning that we knew that our part of the Island wasn't taken. We were under... because of the broadcasts, we were under the impressions that it was. There were supposed to have been landings on Kaneohe. There were supposed to have been landings on Waikiki. We heard everything in the world. And either that day or the next day we heard that they needed people to help take blood. And so we went and helped with transfusions... not transfusions but just taking blood for transfusions at one of the schools. They set up a first aid station.

Q: Do you remember which school?

A: No, I don't, but it was up in that area. It was not far. And we... also, gal who had the short wave radio was a nurse and so she trained a team of us to deliver babies. She said that notoriously, bombings, thunder storms, any unusual occurrences brought on a rash of babies, and so we were trained to do it. My thing was to take alcohol and a pair of scissors and sterilize the scissors by pouring alcohol over them and setting them on fire. And thank God we never needed that, but one of the gals that came up to stay with me had a baby the next day. And I went down to the hospital with her and the black out was then in progress, and so I was there after black out... after curfew that evening, waiting for the baby. And there was no way for me to get back home because there were no cars, and I didn't have a car at the time, and the street cars and things didn't run. And so I finally went to the police station and they sent me home in the Black Mariah (laughter).

Anyway, we did an awful lot of volunteer work around the hospital. We hear that this group needed this and another group needed this, and we just got around. I don't know how we got around because we really didn't have any money. We didn't have a car. But somehow we got where ever it was that we were trying to go.

Q: Getting back to the wards, where did you receive your training as a...

A: At the Iolani Palace.

Q: What was the training like?

A: It was very simple and they were not only training, but we had to take written tests; we had to take medical tests; we had to have inoculations. The training was the Army Sargeant, I believe, from Ft. Shafter, who had been doing the work during the prior months, trained us.

And what we did was get radio or intercom things and we placed little icons on a position board which essentially tracked the movement of all and sea crafts in the area. Correct me Nancy, if that's wrong. Were they under sea things as well? (Nancy replies: I don't think under sea but surface craft.)... Anyway, it was easy training and we were particularly warned again and again against telling it was radar work. We were not sure that the Japanese knew that we had radar.

It was very hush, hush, and we were forbidden to tell anybody what we were doing, where we were going. The secrecy of it was the.... and we had a lot of background checks. Originally, only Honolulu people who will vouch for in every direction were allowed to enter. They found out later there just weren't enough of those, so personnel (Army/Navy Personnel) were allowed in if personally known by the people who formed the organization or if real good credentials could be produced.

And I don't remember any problem about that but oddly enough it ended up with a very picked group of really bright patriotic dedicated nice kind of women. And getting together with them again, it's still a picked group. It's very...

Q: When, under training, when all the secrecy was emphasized, were you told that you were under military discipline at the time?

A: Yes, and we were under military discipline too. And in everything but name, we were a part of the Army under the 7th Command.

Q: Were you issued a uniform?

A: Well, we weren't immediately, but we had uniforms. They were pretty blue uniforms. There was a dress uniform and then a regular uniform. And they were pretty and flattering and we all liked our uniforms I think. On the other hand, we were all supposed to carry gas masks, and before too long we were using our gas masks to carry our make up in and using them as hand bags.

Q: (laughter)

A: Listen, before we get away from December the 7th...

Q: O.K....

A: ... In researching a book I wanted to do about this period, I got letters from a lot of people, and a lot of people answered questionnaires for me. And some of this material you might be interested in. I've sent questionnaires to at least 300 people and have gotten some marvelous things back.

Well, one of the things, I got a letter from my husband (my ex-husband) who was then my husband, and he said that I had watched a submarine being sunk off of Waikiki. I have absolutely no recollection of this. But he said a mini sub was... and I had binoculars and I did watch everything that was going on in town, and filmed what I could. But I don't remember that, but he does.

He also remembers...

Q: What was he doing at the time?

A: He was... the *Saratoga* was in birth in San Diego and so he had a very hard time trying to find out if we were alright; if I was alright. And it was days before we could let people know that we were... just things. Phone lines and everything were

just jammed. You couldn't get out or in. And so somebody ran into him when he flew in (somebody who he had never seen before), and they said, "Burt, your wife lives in St. Louis Heights and she's O.K." and whoever it was knew that we continued to be a boarding house for everybody that came through.

And all the gals who lived at my house, when their husbands would come in, would... they would stay up there. And I remember the husbands gave us a drill and some guns so that we could kill ourselves before we were captured. And so really, we were under the impression that we were about to be taken, for several months thereafter. Things really didn't return to normal until after Midway.

And there were always a thousand rumors going around the Island. We could see from where we stood. We could see the air bases. We could see Pearl and the smoke from everything, and everyone coming back from Pearl would have one horror story right after the other.

Q: As a ward, after you finished your training, what was your first assignment?

A: The very first assignment was taking over a night... uh, they gradually worked us in, in there. What they had been doing is manning the boards by day and manning the radar station. Now with the wards they were able to do through the night.

So my first shift was a night duty and everybody hated the graveyard shift and I loved it. So I used to trade people for the graveyard shift because I like to work at night. And of course we were frightened and interested in taking it over. But we were.... everybody emphasized that we were doing a valuable service, and quite rapidly we took over the entire running, both day and night, of the board. And this was in a place called 'Little Robert', which was a shack and we could have been bombed off the face of the Earth. It wasn't until later that we moved into the tunnel underground.

Q: How did the system work that uh... in other words, your job. It was a gather, a part of a system in which radar operators and fighter operations were all connected up somehow. How did that system work?

A: Well, the radar people were stationed around Hawaii and then

later, all of the Islands. They would report in; we wore earphones. They would report activity to us and we would plot it on the board. Then there were liaison men from all the Services. And say we plotted in an unknown flight of some sort. They would follow that flight and if it became suspicious. Then they in turn would plot... they would call, say, the Air Force, at say... say it was over at Kaneohe. They would alert people and they would go up and intercept the flight. Or somebody would identify a flight as their own. These were Navy fliers coming in from someplace else and they... the military men, then later on (and Nancy can tell you more about this, because she was there longer than I was ) you kept permanent records of the plots for every...

Then there was a thing, we looked in a clock and it was numbered by...

there were say a yellow sector of the clock, and a red, and a green, and a blue, and so at every quarter hour, we changed colors of the plots we were putting on the board. So you could look and say, that was at 10:15 and this was into 10:30. And you got coordinates.

The men that you talked to, the actual radar men were called "Oscars", and we were "Rascals", and the military men were "Majors" (called Majors), right? Majors? (speaking to Nancy...) I've forgotten the nomenclature. But we were not supposed to talk chit-chat with the radar operators. But we weren't supposed to talk to "Oscars" but we would, and they would tell us that their cat up there had kittens. This was mostly during long night watches when nothing was happening.

Then we got quite frequent breaks from the board. There were always alternates. I expect the real problem from the management stand point was getting enough people on every shift to where the people could be relieved at the board and we were trucked... we went to work... The shifts were quite short, I'd say about 4 hours? (Nancy replies: At first, it was different...) Uh, we changed this two or three different times. We fine tuned it all the time.

But we were trucked up to "Little Robert" and as I remember it, the first three or four months, it rained all of the time. It was incredibly muddy. Sometimes we took our boots off and went barefoot through the mud and sometimes we wore boots all of the time. But all I remember is it being cold and dark and muddy in the night struggling up the hill to "Little Robert" and at first it was scary and later on it became a lot of fun.

We had taken over Officer's Housing and there were usually three of us to a house, and an awful lot of good friendships were made of people doing what we considered hazardous work, and we felt useful and important. And being an "island" of women in a "sea" of men, we also felt cute as hell (laughter.) We really permanently got our heads turned because we dated all day and ... you would have dates for breakfast, lunch, before and after shift, for dinner, and then after dinner. And so we really had a good War.

And we had prisoners of war, I believe, patrolling the area, and we had something that was popularly known as a "wake bell" that we could signal headquarters if we were in any problems of any kind (laughter.) We had all officers privileges. We ate at the Officer's Mess. We had the golf course, tennis courts, swimming pool, hula lessons, the gym, everything anybody could want as far as recreation. We were awfully well taken care of.

Q: You mentioned "Little Robert" and then moving up to the tunnel. What was the tunnel called?

A: Well, it was "Lizard."

Q: What was that like? How was that different from "Little Robert"?

A: It was enormously bigger. It was underground. The whole thing was underground. There were special problems. Some girls ultimately left because they simply could not work underground all day long, and it was considered... I do think there were some increase in colds and flu and things from the... But you felt safer there and there were several rooms. There was the big

plotting room; there was a room where you went when you were off shift; and there was artificial air-conditioning and everything. And most of the time, the climate was bearable, but sometimes it got very bad down there.

Q: What was your particular job as a ward?

A: I can't think of any particular job I had. Nancy was one of the officers of the wards, and she can tell you a lot more about the structure. And I've got several people that I would love for you to interview just because they were in superior positions, where they helped with the actual running of the organization.

Q: You mentioned that around the plotting board, there were Army, and Navy, and Air Corps officers around there. What did it seem to you, what the relations were like between the different services and the different branches?

A: They got on fine. We know for a fact, about all the inter-service rivalry which really impeded their setting up the radar... I understood from some of the people who were there for the reunion, that they would have at the time of the raid, by about two or three days (it was the closest margin you ever saw) they would have had to set up.... we ultimately had (were it not for inter-service rivalry) nobody could agree on who manned what and just how to work the things. And so they had all the technology.

One of the men had been in England and had studied the radar set up there. And they were ready to go, and to have it manned around the clock, and they just could not get everybody together. But the time that we were there, it seemed to me that there was perfect cooperation and cordiality. I think people didn't know that a lot of the goof ups before and around the raid, had to do with inter-service rivalry. And so I think they... as far as I knew, it was cordial and professional.

Q: You mentioned a couple of minutes ago that being one of the small number of women among a big group of men, you had a pretty active social life (laughter). How did it seem to you that the men accepted women working in, basically what amounted to a man's job?

A: They loved it! They loved it! They welcomed our being there and I think there was something about the niceness of the group and the seriousness of the work, that made for respect on both sides. We were very professional group. They loved having women there and oddly enough, they were very sweet to us and we weren't besieged all the time. We really didn't need the "break bells". They were very respectful of us. They were glad to just be able to smell a girl's hair, or have them across the table for breakfast. They were darling to us.

And there just were no problems with thinking that we didn't do a good job. Perhaps because we were efficient, they appreciated it. And they said, (several people said) that we were better at it than the military were; that we endured the fatigue of it, and the boredom of it, better than the men did.

Q: You also, I guess, you had different groups of women there; some women from the Islands, some military wives, I guess some, later recruits from the mainland. How did those groups of women... different groups of women.... get along with one another?

A: As far as I could tell, everybody just you know, were wonderful. Now I was not there when the people came over from the mainland. And we did coordinate some people from the high schools and colleges too.

The schools would make it possible for those kids to come up for four hour shifts, and there were a lot of people... We were also short handed so we welcomed any new people who could come and help out. And as far as I know there were no problems. Now I know from my research that there were problems. I never saw any.

I was in a household of three people who just adored each other and there were a lot of stable households of people, and then they would assign new people to you and so you'd break your back to make them feel welcome, and fill them in on things.

Q: Did they give you living quarters?

A: They were living quarters. They were nice living quarters. They were usually two-story houses, three women to a house. And they were nice houses. Somebody just told me a funny story about, we went out so much that nobody cooked very much at home, though we had nice kitchens. And somebody did a refrigerator contest and they went through everybody's refrigerator, finally found one with food in it, so they gave her the prize. Everybody else kept their stockings and ordinance in the refrigerator... and their booze (laughter.)

Q: (laughter) Do you recall how much you got paid as a ward?

A: I think, and it seemed princely to me, I think it was a \$150 plus all our living quarters. I believe we paid... now Nancy will probably be better at this, and I can... if it's important, I've got the amounts in my notes at home. But it seemed like a lot of money to me. We paid for our own food, but it was at Mess and we were able to go to the PX and things. And none of us were there... I mean we were all wives of servicemen or something. Had other incomes. So this was mad money anyway.

Q: Were you ever trained to use a weapon?

A: We were trained in pistols. We were trained in poison gases (how to detect them). We were trained to do a fire hose. We

were encouraged to go and do pistol practice. Yeah, I know I had a gun but I don't know how many other people had guns. And, but that was left me by Carl Fogg. Do you remember Carl Fogg? (speaking to Nancy) He was killed very early...



Q: Carl who?

A: His name was Carl Fogg, and he was from ...

Q: Do you remember how to spell the name?

A: F-O-G-G. (Nancy says: Carlton was his real name.) Carlton Fogg, yeah. And he left me... he was one of the people that passed through up on St. Louis Heights, and he left us his gun so we could kill ourselves. And I had that gun through most of the ... But anyway, we were obviously given target practice, but I don't know what guns we used again. Were we issued them or...? (Nancy says: No, we just used them for practice.) We just used them for target practice. (Nancy says: No, wait a minute...) It's... (... oh no, we practiced with rocks, strengthening our shooting arms; holding a rock.) I hadn't remembered that. (Right, so that we could get strong. Because this wasn't like today. This was used for the site. This was one arm.) That's right... did like so.

Q: In all the time when you were working as a ward, do you recall ever having a real alert where they actually thought there was some penetration?

A: Oh, we had a number of them and we went to the air raid shelters from time to time. And there was indeed, one instance where somebody dropped some bombs up over the Pali or someplace.

Then there was (ask Nancy about this later on) there was a mystery flight that would come on in the night; an airplane somewhere would circle around. It would go above the air bases and then it would disappear off the board. And this happened from time, and time, and time again. I believe it was finally believed to be an airplane off of a submarine.

Q: Were you a ward at the time of the Battle of Midway?

A: No, I'd already gone. But then.... but I understand that everybody knew something was happening. I mean everybody was aware that there was a big push. We were always aware. We got information from a lot of different sources and you can feel the excitement and we could feel that there was a big build up. And of course you could see thousands of planes and ships going out. And every single action, we were aware of probably more than... sooner than other people. And one girl would get some scuttle butt and pretty well went around the... it wasn't just the girls. The major officers too got scuttlebutt. And all of a sudden they would turn out to be hundreds of people come up and watch the board, and we'd know something was up. And we'd find out later what it was.

There was one instance where there was a volcanic eruption that was thought to be something and we'd spoiled our black out and uh.... Incidentally, all the cars were blacked out and you had to grope around with blue lights on the cars. And then we would... I know my car, we would go to some airfield someplace

and then would let us drain the gasoline out of the airplanes into the cars. So my little Ford didn't know how to anything but air fuel.

Also, people would fly in steaks and things that were hard to get from.... Any time anyone went to the Island of Hawaii they'd bring us back a bunch of steaks. Liquor was rationed and I remember we all used... when there was going to be a party, you used everybody's rations. But we really didn't do without very much of anything. It was funny, we had.... sometimes things were scarce; just what hadn't come over on the boat, and there'd be a month when there was no toilet paper and there would be a month when there was some other scarcity.

We also, in food, I remember, we would have a fairly monotonous diet and we ate a lot of pineapple that year.... that first year. We would have it sliced for breakfast, diced for lunch, pulverized for dinner, and a lot of us got burned out on pineapple.

We also had a rest and recreation house on the other side of the Island which were one of the fun things that were done; the many fun things that were available to us.

Q: I don't have any other questions.

A: Well, it was an interesting time and that particular group of women I feel not only made a contribution but are under reported. I do think we did a difficult job well and I'll remember the period of time as a period of growth (personal growth) and enormous wonderful friendships.

Q: Thank you.

A: O.K.